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RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

PHILOSOPHY OF THEISM, being the Gifford Lectures in 1894-5.
By ALEXANDER CAMPBELL FRASER, LL.D. 1st Ser. New
York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1895. 3+333 pp. \$2.50 *net*.

THIS work of a veteran metaphysician — Professor Fraser was born in 1819 and succeeded Hamilton in the chair of logic at Edinburgh in 1857 — embodies the reflections of a lifetime on the greatest of all themes. They are the reflections of an able as well as a studious man, who knows what has been said in the past on the subject by the foremost thinkers since philosophy had its birth, but whose wide knowledge has operated to stimulate his mind to independent thought. It is a mind as far as possible from being inert, but, at the same time, is in no haste to make premature avowals. The author's excellent editions of Berkeley and Locke contain introductions and notes which disclose his leanings on controverted points of highest moment, and his other writings, comparatively few in number, are, also, in this respect enlightening. What strikes us first and last in this volume, which is not a copious one, is that here we have ripe fruit. Nothing is immature, nothing bears marks of crudity. An unaffected consciousness of the gravity of the task that is undertaken is expressed at the beginning, and appears in every stage of the discussion. There is no effort to present novel forms of statement; the language is simple and natural, yet fresh from the mint. In style and method this volume is a model of philosophical clearness and sobriety, and, it may truly be added, of depth.

The problem is concerned with the meaning and purpose of the universe in which we find ourselves, or with the Infinite Reality, God. It is formulated by the author in a form partly suggested by the statement of Locke. The three existences which are recognized in common belief, and are taken into account when "the enigma" whose solution is sought is inquired into, are our own personality, the material world, and God. Each of them is differently conceived by different minds. Yet these three existences are postulated in all investigations of the kind here attempted. Supernatural revelation cannot be dogmatically assumed.

Miracles require proof, and there would be no warrant for assuming that any possible miracles would be departures from a rationality pervading the universe as a whole. Is the universe reasonable? Is there an immanent reason, an all-embracing order? "Anterior and independent of philosophy, a spontaneous faith in self, in external nature, and in God seems to pervade human experience, mixing, often unconsciously, with the lives of all; never perfectly defined, but in its fundamental ideas always and necessarily incomplete; latent often intellectually, yet never without a threefold influence in human life." The "unbalanced recognition" of one of the three over the other two is the fountain of error and moral disorder. The philosophical theories, the great generic solutions, which are examined and criticised by Professor Fraser, are examples of a like over-emphasis in the field of thought and speculation. First, we have universal materialism where God and the human ego are submerged in matter. Secondly, we have panegoism, where God and matter are alike swallowed up in the subjective consciousness. Thirdly, we have pantheism, wherein the personality of God and of man are sacrificed, and all things are brought under one or another scheme of necessity and unity. The one-sided character of each of these theories, what things are left unexplained by each, are set forth in four well-reasoned chapters, in which, as elsewhere, cogency of reasoning is associated with temperance in language. Then follows (in chap. vii) a searching criticism of the doctrine of "universal nescience," from its foundations in the writings of Hume to its latest forms as presented by Huxley, Spencer, and other recent writers. The reader who has time to study but one section of Professor Fraser's book would do well to devote his attention to this seventh chapter with the summary at the beginning of the preceding course of thought. In the chapter (x) on "God in Nature" it is shown that "natural causation is a term expressive of the interpretability of the world in which we find ourselves; and the interpretation of nature implies interpreting mind dependent on the correlation of that mind with Mind immanent in Nature." "If we are to form any conception of the substance or supreme principle of the whole, it must be the conception either of substance that is unconscious and extended, or of substance that is intelligent and foreign to extension." The materialistic hypothesis wholly fails to account for spiritual states. We are brought (chap. ix) to the subject of "Man Supernatural." We find in him the *sui generis* fact of self-determination. Both "science and morality in man imply more than natural sequence."

"An *immoral* act *must originate* in the immoral agent; a physical effect is not *known to originate* in its physical cause." Matter, inorganic and organic, presupposes mind; but the reverse is not equally true. The conscience and the religious consciousness in man are the starting point of religion within us. It is no more true of religion than it is of science, with its presupposition of order and purpose in nature, that it is a "leap in the dark in faith and hope." "Self-determining intelligence and responsibility for what is personally determined, seems to contradict the presupposed universality of natural causation, and puts us face to face with an originative cause, as that to which alone power is rightly attributed." This is a pregnant sentence. The observations of Professor Fraser on the partial comprehensibleness of that with which both cosmic faith and religious faith are concerned and which attaches, therefore, to both natural science and to theism, are extremely interesting and suggestive. In this notice of these valuable lectures nothing more has been attempted than to present their claims to the attention of all earnest inquirers into the philosophic basis of faith in the fundamental doctrines of religion.

YALE DIVINITY SCHOOL.

GEORGE P. FISHER.

SCIENCE DES RELIGIONS DU PASSÉ, ET DE L'AVENIR, DU JUDAÏSME ET DU CHRISTIANISME. Par F. RÉTHORÉ. Paris. 1894.

No detailed account of this book is necessary to give a clear conception of the task which the author has set for himself, and of the manner in which he has accomplished it. Let it be noticed that the title announces a "scientific" rather than a historical or philosophical treatment of religious phenomena. The distinction is defined in an introduction of two pages on the "Plan and End of this Work." *History*, "by the aid of observation, establishes, describes, and coördinates the religious phenomena." *Science*, "by the aid of the critical history, ascends to the origins of these phenomena, examines the laws to which they are subject, compares and pronounces upon them." Then *philosophy*, "by the aid of the psychological and rational method, separates and selects the irreducible elements of religious thought, studies them in their genesis and logical development; but above all estimates them from the point of view of their certitude as well objective as subjective; or, in other words, evinces the principles of knowledge, of faith, and of doubt, upon the subject-matter of religion." There is something to commend itself in this way of